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(OF THE DEVIL AND HIS COURT)
BY NED FINDLEY, ESQUIRE,
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ed. This is spoken under the authority of her neighbours! From whose report it would appear that she never felt the glow of a tender sentiment; nor even knew the sweet meltings of pity for any child but her own. Poor Polly Middleton (afterwards Mrs. Findley) and her two little sisters were of course treated like Negro Children. They never experienced those sweet caresses, those fond attentions which the infant heart naturally expects, and so greatly needs. But few were the smiles that ever brightened on their pale cheeks—seldom was the sparkle of joy in their orphan'd eyes. Their wardrobe was one scanty shift—a blanket and the hearth were their bed and bedding. *There*, these three little neglected creatures sighed or slept, while their step mother and her children, wrapped in warmth and down sent the night away in soft delicious slumbers! But this unnatural woman, not content with the aforesaid barbarities to her step daughters, suffered her dislike to carry her so far, till at length unable to bear them in her sight, she turned them into the kitchen! There among the slaves they lived and laboured, coarse, ignorant, and neglected for several years!

Such inhuman treatment has shortened the life of many a poor child; and driven others to act of ruinous imprudence. It was exactly so in this case; for Polly, the second sister, and in understanding weaker than the others, thinking herself, one day, more than commonly ill treated, quitted the house and went to live with an elder sister who was married. This rash step was but another name for *seduction* and *ruin*, to a poor weak girl under her unfortunate circumstances. She had, as we have seen, been educated very servilely! And nothing so debases, nothing so demoralizes a child, as servile education. A young woman who has long been denied the rights of a daughter, long kept under hatches like a servant, with a mind depressed and spirits broken, can hardly ever go into company with safety. The kind looks, sweet

smiles, and polite attention she meets there—things so *unusual* with her, poor girl! make a false impression, "*O what dear good people she has got among!*"

A young gentleman gives her a tender glance—instantly a soft sigh heaves her bosom—she turns aside her down-cast cheeks red with blushes—her own father had seldom ever given her a tender look! Then, "*What a charming young gentleman this must be!*"

Well, he plies her with attentions—pays handsome compliments—says a world of fond things—makes a number of pretty presents—and his work is done! For she, poor simple soul! all gratitude and love, reposes a confidence in him which he abuses to her ruin.

Citizen reader, do you know how they enslave the sagacious and mighty elephant? *No!* Well then, I'll put you up to that piece of knowledge. The elephant, you must know seldom or never *lies down* to sleep, but takes his nap on *all fours*, resting his mammoth carcase against some mammoth tree. The huntsmen mark the place of his rest; and while the elephant is abroad, regaling himself in a *cane-brake*, or *an Indian-corn field*, they come and dig a deep pit by the side of the tree, bridging it over with saplings, handsomely covered with earth and leaves. Soon as the drab-coloured evening with her screech-owls begin to make honest people think of home, the elephant sets out for his simple lodging, and there with a thundering crash comes down into the pit. At first, he burns with rage at the treachery of man—he tears into gibblets all the smaller trees that lie within his reach—he heaves his mighty chest against the side of the pit, but his enormous weight keeps him down. "He can't get out." For three days and nights the hunters heed him not, leaving it to hunger and thirst to take off his fiery edge—on the fourth

day, one of them comes with a long pole and falls upon him most unmercifully. At every blow the poor elephant shrinks and groans; and with trickling tears often looks around to the man for pity. But the man, as if he had never heard of such a thing as pity, continues to *lay on*. Presently out starts from the bushes a *second* huntsman, who pretends to take the elephant's part, and snatching up a shelalah, *lathers* away at his adversary, whom he drives off with knocks and curses—"*O you cruel wretch! What murder a poor brute at this rate?*" Then going to the elephant, he pats him on the back, and coaxes and wheedles him like a *kitten*—"*Poor fellow!* says he, *poor fellow! and did they beat you so, my little pig!—What! did the villain mean to murder my poor elephant?*" After this he brings him an armful of fodder, and some water, which the half-starved animal greedily devours, with tears of gratitude rolling down his face. The next day, about the same hour, the fellow with the long pole comes again, and falls to work upon him like a very devil incarnate. The poor elephant, concluding that *now his time is certainly come*, gives himself up for dead; but just as he is *making his peace*, who should hop out of the bushes but his *dear good friend* again? A *sham fight* is instantly knocked up with great fury, at the close of which the elephant has the infinite joy to find that victory declares in favour of his *dear friend*, who comes and pats him again, bringing more fodder and water. This *vile farce* of alternate cruelty and kindness is played on the elephant for several days, during which the poor animal contracts such a love for his supposed friend, that he follows him like a dog, and with his trunk putting him on his back, becomes his slave for life. Thus is humbled an animal, which measures, when full grown, from fifteen to eighteen feet, and weighs from twelve to twenty thousand pounds!

Woe to the poor girl who is thus tossed between *cruel relatives* at home, and a fond sympathizing *male friend* abroad! Like the elephant, she is in a very *fair way* to be brutalized and enslaved for ever.

This was mournfully illustrated in the history of Polly Middleton; barbarously treated *at home*, she had fled, as we have seen, to an elder sister, a married lady. In the family lived a young man, a near relative of her sister's husband. The youth and "woe worn looks" of this unfortunate girl touched his heart with pity. Yielding to the soft impulse he acted the brother's part by her; and at first, no doubt, with great sincerity and innocence. But alas! in young bosoms the angel Pity, is too apt to degenerate into brutal appetite. So it proved with this young man. For having by his generous sympathies completely won her affections, he cruelly took advantage of her confidence in him, and in one fatal moment blasted the whole life's happiness of a poor girl, whom both in honour and humanity he was bound to protect!

Her situation during pregnancy was extremely unpleasant; and in a short time after the birth of her infant, she was turned out of doors by her sister! In this deplorable condition, like the poor Prodigal, her thoughts turned towards her father, though from him there was but little to hope. However, there appeared no *alternative*, she must either go or perish. So taking up her child, she set out on foot. Her journey was distant and dreary, and alas! poor girl! nothing had she to alleviate its horrors—no sun-shine of innocence to brighten her road——no conscious virtue to support her feeble steps—no beloved father to run and rejoice over his short-breath'd pale-faced daughter; nor fond sisters *eagerly gathering around*, and striving who first should snatch and smother with kisses her little babe. These, O virtue! are only *thy* precious perquisites. But Polly had

chosen guilt. And the GREAT FATHER had said, "*while in guilt she shall never know peace.*" When foolish lambs forsake the path that leads to ever-green pastures by the waters of life, will the good Shepherd suffer them to wander away and be for ever lost? Oh no! he sends the rough dogs of his love to worry and tear them till they return. Polly was a lamb that had wandered; to deter others from walking in the steps of her folly, she is made to bear the burden of her iniquity. See her now turned out of doors! Out of doors by her own sister! and out of the doors of a man, whose own brother had wrought her ruin! Pale and in tears she moved along, covered with rags and scorn, and bending under the double weight of sin and sorrow.

Still as she went, the image of her father would often come across her troubled thoughts—his *smiling image* as in former happy days when placing her on his lap, he used to kiss and call her his *own little angel!* The tender thought rekindles all her soul—she flies to his bosom—she clasps his knees, and with looks and language fervent as when dying sinners pray, she paints her miseries, and implores forgiveness——forgiveness to a once loved daughter, whose mother is now in dust.—She prevails! her father is all her own! Strain'd to his throbbing heart she hears his bursting sobs, and feels her face all wet with his gushing tears.

But too soon, alas! the dear delusion vanishes—her father appears before her again, black with rage, and with eyes of lightning and thundering voice, upbraids her wickedness, and spurns her from his presence, "*Stain of my family! Detested wretch, begone!*"

His voice rings in her frightened ears! she shrinks from his fiery eyes! her whole soul is filled with terror! Fain would she have turned aside to the poorest cottage, where she might but find a crust for herself, and a little milk for her babe; but alas! in all this wide world she knew of no such place.

Such were the thoughts that distracted her mind as she travelled along, fearful and alone, towards her father's dwelling. 'Twas near night when she arrived. Immediately on entering the yard, she was recollected by the Negroes, who all ran to meet her crying out, *Here's Miss Polly! here's Miss Polly!*" Half mad with joy they gathered around her, eager, at first, to *shake hands*. But when they came to see her pale looks, her mean dress, and that she had a little child in her arms, their joy was turned into sorrow, and several of them wept. Children of nature! how could you refrain from weeping, when you saw, thus *outcast* and *forlorn*, your master's own daughter, and that daughter the orphan of a once beloved mistress! Indeed she could not help weeping herself; for their sad and silent countenances went like a dagger to her heart, and made her sensible, poor girl! how low she was fallen! By this time, the noise made in the yard had brought Mrs. Middleton to the door.

The reader will please to take notice, that this was not the same Mrs. Middleton who had treated Polly so barbarously. Oh no! she, poor woman, was gone to her *own place*. In a reasonable time after her death, the Major married again. This which happened to be his *fourth* match, did much more honour to his taste and judgment than the last, for she proved to be an excellent woman. She had often heard of poor Polly, and sincerely pitied her misfortunes. Soon, therefore, as she heard the servants, as before said, saluting their young mistress, she went to the door where Polly was standing with her child in her arms, and the negroes around her.

"*Is this Polly Middleton?*" said she.

"*Yes Madam,*" replied Polly.

"*Well, come in, Polly, come in and take a seat;*" and placing a chair close to the fire, desired her to sit down.

This conversation, together with the noise made by the crowding Negroes, waked Polly's child, who began to cry most piteously. "*Poor little creature, give him to me*, said Mrs. Middleton, *give him to me; perhaps he is hungry*,"—then looking at Polly with great tenderness, she asked her if she had dined. Such unexpected goodness quite overcame the poor girl; who, looking down, could make no reply but by her tears. A comfortable dinner was presently set before her, but she could scarce do more than taste it; fatigue and trouble had taken away her appetite.

Finding herself quite exhausted by her long walk, she begged to go to bed early. The good Mrs. Middleton paid her the respect of accompanying her to the chamber where she was to lie. Scarcely had they entered it when Polly suddenly stopped, and looking around, fetched a most distressing groan.

"What's the matter, Polly? said Mrs. Middleton, what are you troubled about, my dear?"

"Troubled! Oh Madam! replied she, I am troubled—I am troubled indeed! This chamber almost breaks my heart. It recals scenes which I can hardly think of without distraction. This, Madam, is the very chamber where my mother told me I was born, and here that dear parent died. On that bed she died. Oh! never shall I forget what passed here a few days before her death. My two little sisters and myself were playing here on this floor. At that time, I was, as I have been told, about five years old. My mother, then in the last stage of a consumption, was lying on that bed, supporting her head on the palm of her hand, with her elbow on the pillow. Oh! I can see her, pale and melancholy as she lay; I can see her as plain as if she was now lying there before my eyes. As we were playing I heard a noise, and suddenly turning to the bed I saw my poor mother shaking with a strong

fit of crying.—Oh madam! it was then that I first felt the bitterness of grief. I felt it like a load on my heart, ready to burst it. I broke into a loud cry, and running to her, threw my arms around her neck, with my face in her bosom. She strained me to her, as though she would have strained me into her very soul. She bathed us with her tears; and lifting up her eyes, exclaimed, O my God! my God! what will become of my poor orphans when I am dead and gone! and when that woman shall come to be mistress here? ——Oh my mother! my mother! the storm which you saw gethering over my head, has come—it has come and bursted on me, and I am lost, lost forever!"

"Oh Polly, *said good Mrs. Middleton*, don't lay things so much to heart, I trust in God you will yet see brighter days."

"Oh no, Madam! *replied she*, never, never! there are no bright days for me! The sun may rise and shine on others, but never on me. Guilt, like a cloud, has come and darkened me in the morning of my days—Oh! that I had died when my mother died! that one grave had contain'd us both! how sweetly should I have slept, lock'd in her embraces; my innocent dust mingling with hers! and when that LAST MORNING came, O with what joy would I have join'd my mother's steps to meet the GREAT REDEEMER'S face, and in his presence to live and rejoice with her forever! But now, alas! she is gone; and poor miserable me! I shall never perhaps see her again; never be permitted to embrace and live with her any more!"

"Why, Polly, *said Mrs. Middleton*, why will you give way to such sad thoughts?"

"Oh Madam! *replied she*, my wickedness, I'm afraid, will separate me from her however. She was all innocence: I all pollution! She was the glory of her sex, I its disgrace the disgrace of her name and

family—SHADE of my dishonoured mother! look not so dark and angry upon me! Oh! why thus turning away from me, do you lift your sad eyes to heaven and heave that piercing sigh."

"Come my dear child, *said the good Mrs. Middleton*, don't go on at this rate. Repentance is a blessed thing, Polly, but it should never drive us to despair.—You have sinned, my child; I have sinned; and so have all. But forever blessed be God, who has asured us, that if we will but repent, our sins shall never be our ruin—but that he will bury them for ever from our sight as in the depth of the sea, and will forgive us freely, and will love us heartily as tho' we had never sinned at all."

"Oh my dear, dear madam! said Polly, eagerly snatching her hand and giving her a devouring look, do you think God can ever forgive, can ever love *me*?"

"Yes indeed, indeed he can, Polly, I am certain he can, my dear?"

"Oh Madam, help me! help me, but to that heaven! and on bended knees I will thank God for you, to all eternity."

"Well, gladly, Polly, most gladly indeed will I do all I can for you: and I pray God to bless my endeavors! and I shall have better hope if your father can but get over his passion and take you to live with us."

"Oh Madam! I am not worthy to live with you. But if my father will only be so good as not to turn me away, but let me stay on the plantation; that will be enough. I shan't ask to live with you. Oh no! the kitchen or quarter will be good enough for me and my little son. There we will thankfully live—and there gladly will I work my fingers to the bone, content with bread and water, so I may but enjoy so blessed an opportunity to recover my innocence and peace."

Presently after this, Mrs. Middleton wished Polly a good night, and retired, leaving her to take that repose, which, 'twas plain, she greatly needed. But scarcely was she laid down, very thankful, no doubt, for so kind a reception, and fondly hoping yet to see better days, when her father came home. As yet he had heard nothing of his daughter's being in the house; but while he was at supper, her child happened to fetch a scream. In great surprise, he asked what that meant. "Nothing, my dear," replied his wife, "but only that poor Polly is come with her little child to implore your forgiveness."

"Well that," returned he, with great warmth, "she shall never have!"

"Oh! Mr. Middleton dont talk so, is not this poor girl your own child?"

"Child or no child, she shall never have my forgiveness. I disown her. What Forgive a wretch that has disgraced my name, and scandalized my family! No never!"

"Oh! my dear husband, how can we hope for God's forgiveness, unless we forgive one another?"

"Well, I know that; but I do not believe God can want me to forgive a harlot."

"Why, my dear, that is the very person we ought to forgive. A poor girl, who has fallen from innocence and happiness, and covered herself with shame and misery, is the proper object of our pity and prayers. And if she should return to us with such precious symptoms of repentance as poor Polly brings, I am sure we ought to run and embrace her, and forgive her, and not only forgive, but kill the fatted calf, and return heartiest thanks to God for her recovery. This, my dear husband, is the nature of true love, as we see the example of the blessed God towards the poor prodigal."

"Well, you need not talk to me about poor prodigals, for I am determined to punish her as an exam-

ple to others: and that I'm sure will be pleasing to God."

"Nothing, Major Middleton, can be pleasing to God, that is cruel to any poor creature. For, GOD IS LOVE, and it is mercy he delighteth in and not sacrifice."

"Well Madam, you may as well hush preaching to me: for I will never forgive her, that's the long and short of it. And never again after this night shall she darken my door as long as she lives."

But waving a dialogue, the rusult of which was so little honorable to human nature, suffice it to say, that the poor creature was barely suffered to stay in the house that night. In the morning he gave her three dollars, and regardless of her tears and cries, had her mounted on horse-back, with her child, behind a servant, and sent off. At some distance from the house lay the main road that leads to Charleston Soon as they had reached the road the slave stopped: She asked the cause.—"*Master told me, miss Polly,* replied he, *to bring you here and leave you.*" Then taking her down, with tears in his eyes he bid her farewell, and left her!

The place where she was left was a wild wood—all around was dark and dreary—the winds mourned in the tops of the pines—and her infant, as if conscious of their woeful state, quitted the breast, and leaning back on her arm, with piercing cries to heaven implored on his mother and himself that pity which the world had refused. The measure of her miseries seemed now to be full. Her last hope had failed—no father had she now—no sister—no friend—a poor out cast of nature, disowned by every body, she felt her heart ready to burst. A sudden gush of tears came to her relief, and unburthened her loaded heart. After weeping a good while, she strained her little son to her bosom and arose to go, alas! she knew not wither.—Her wandering steps were

directed to the cabin of a lonely widow, who poor herself, had learnt to feel for the poor. With this good woman she spent several days of welcome rest, partaking of her simple hospitalities, bread and roots, and milk.

The report of her having been turned out of doors by her father, was soon spread abroad among the neighbours, not without exciting a just indignation at so unnatural a deed! It came at length to the ears of her seducer, and renewed in his bosom the gnawings of that worm which never dies. Torn by remorse for the irreparable injury he had done the poor girl, he sent her word that there was an empty cabin on his land, where she might go and stay.—She immediately repaired to it with her child; and there, *all alone*, they lived a long while. Their only food was a little corn boiled in some naked water—some charitable hand had sent her a small iron pot for the purpose. From a neighbouring field she was allowed to gether corn; and sticks from the forest. Her seducer came at length to see her; and with a generosity that does him credit, took home her little boy, and clothed him handsomely; meaning to act a father's part by him. But the child was not long to be a trouble or a charge to any body. For, in losing his mother, he lost that *living balsam*, that *vital something*, which only a mother's *eyes*, a mother's *soft warm kisses* can impart. For lack of this he soon began to pine, and oft times even in the midst of his play, would burst out into bitter weeping. But presently he sickened, and ceased from all his sorrows: for God took him to himself.—In his last illness, which was very short, his mother was sent for, but did not arrive till he was dying.—The moment he saw her, his whole soul seemed to fly out to his eyes—*Oh my Ma! my Ma!* he exclaimed, then stretched his little arms trembling with impatience to clasp *once more* her beloved neck. In this last fond effort his feeble nature sunk under

him; for immediately on recovering the dear cradle of her arms, he laid his fainting cheeks on her bosom, then feebly crowing, in sign of bliss, he closed his eyes in the long last sleep. Just as his soul was departing from him, his mouth all at once assumed the sweetest smile that ever charmed on a Cherub's lips. He appeared to the astonished spectators as if he had suddenly seen some lovely sight. 'Tis probable that the dying infant had then first seen the BRIGHT GUARD that waited to carry him home.—Glory to him who said "*suffer the little children to come unto me,*" and sends his own Flaming Angels to escort them to his presence.

Bitter were the cries of his mother when she committed to earth this fond and faithful little companion of *her five years sorrows.* Ice-cold and stiff were those beloved feet that were wont so readily to accompany her to the spring for water, or to the wood for sticks. But though *gone;* he was still with her; still present to her every sense of weeping fancy. Still she could see that face which smiled so bright, when, bending under the weight of a pine knot, he heard her praise him for "*a good little boy.*" Still sounded in her ear that voice, sweeter than music, which prattled so lively as they walk'd along, and fondly promised "*how he would work for her when he grew to be a man.*"

O! dry thine eyes, thou faithless mother! Thy young beam is *not quenched.* That which, in thy son, so *sweetly smil'd,* and *look'd,* and *lov'd,* was not of *dust.* It was a *breath* of the ETERNAL SPIRIT, Fearfully and wonderfully woven was that robe of clay which he wore for a few days. But 'tis dropt, and the cherub is with his God. The bright Youth of heaven are around him—the royal race of Infant Saints are his companions. Beauteous playmates of angels! they live, and love, and rejoice together in the great Redeemer's presence. Oh! wouldst thou have him back again in this vale of sin and sorrow!!!

His little grave is still seen in the garden of him who ruined his mother. The children, as they play, come at times to the spot. Struck with sudden sympathy, they forget for a moment to laugh; while, gazing on his tomb with sorrow soften'd looks, they exclaim, "*that's poor little Billy's grave!*" The tear is sometimes on their cheeks, as slowly turning away, they look at each other in silence, and heave that sigh which they can't explain. Soft blue eyes of youth! moist with the dews of pity, O! let not that sacred shining cease! but speak your sorrows for the *dead* in looks of double kindness to the *living*. 'Tis for this, that God takes away some of his little lambs, that the rest may love one another the more.

Our troubles often visit us in *pairs*—it was so with poor Polly at this time; for scarcely had her son fallen into that sleep which shall last till the heavens pass away, before her father was taken down to rise no more. —Feeling that his great change was at hand, he set himself seriously to make his peace with God. And then, from what I can learn, his cruel treatment of his *daughter* lay heavy on his heart. "*He was afraid*, he said, *he had carried things too far—at any rate she shall have an equal part of my estate.*" He often spoke of her with tears in his eyes; calling her his "*poor child! His poor ruined child!*"

As the last and *best* evidence he could give of contrition for all his past cruelties to her, he made no will: leaving it to the excellent law of the land to give her a child's part.

This equal distribution of her father's estate, whereby Polly became Mistress of a handsome fortune, gave great joy to all the neighbours. They fondly hoped that she would soon get a *good husband*, and spend the rest of her days in *innocence and peace*. This, the *general* desire of the *imprudent* of our young sisters, appears to have been very heartily the wish of Polly Middleton. And had it been her fate to have

get a *name* for frightening women and children. But alas! this is no fiction, no romance, but a sober history of what *Findley was*, and what any youth *may be*, who chooses like him, to do violence to the spirit of love, and yield himself up the accursed slave of lust and hate. Yes, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, however shocking to our feelings, it must yet be admitted as an awful fact, that Ned Findley affected the lover, and married this unfortunate girl, with no other view than to get her estate, and then to murder her out of his way!! In a very *few days* after their marriage, he began to find fault and to *quarrel* with her; and presently went to such shameful lengths, as to whip her severely.—But though so brutal in his treatment *to her*; yet, O divine amiableness of woman! she appeared still to be fond of him! She watched his looks, anticipated his wishes, and appeared never so happy as when he did not scold her for any thing she did for him. But all in vain. Nothing could soften his heart of flint. Not all her *tears*—not all her *timidities*—nor all her anxieties, now *redoubled*, could avail to please. 'Twas in vain that, to give his linen the most snow-white hue, she stood at the wash-tub herself. 'Twas in vain that to please his palate, she scorched herself over the fire, as his *cook*—aye, and equally vain that she set up *till midnight* making or mending his clothes, still he would storm and abuse——still tossing in his bed with grog-blossom'd cheeks, and raving with drunkenness, he would curse and threaten! Filled at length with that diabolical hatred, which could no longer *bear the sight of her* though in her *own house!* and thinking every hour she lived, an hour too long, he came to the horrid resolution of murdering her! With this view, on the Sunday morning which ushered in their *eighth* week after marriage, he got into a violent passion at breakfast, because, as he said, "*the coffee was no better than hog-wash*," and leaping up, seized her by the hair, and dragging her to

the floor, kicked and beat her very barbarously.—After this he went out, *damning* and *blasting*, into the yard, where he stalked about with the eyes of a raging tyger, and a countenance black and terrible as the passions of hell could make it; then, bouncing in again, he snatched up his hat and went off to one of the neighbours, leaving this poor woman, wringing her hands and crying, and wishing to God "she had never been born!"

Poor afflicted sister! thy sorrows will soon be ended!

At twelve o'clock he came home to dinner, which he swallowed without speaking a word to any of the family. Soon as dinner was over he told his wife and sister to put on their cloaks, for he wanted them to go over with him to see Mr. Gilchrist's family. His wife turned pale at this proposition: for it seems they could not go to Mr. Gilchrist's without crossing a deep flood called Stephen's creek; and fearing, from his dreadful looks, that he wanted to destroy her in the creek, she begged he would *excuse* her. He insisted on her going. Whereupon she fell a crying, and told him she was so hurt from his beating her in the morning, that she could not walk so far. He swore she should *try it at any rate*: and accompanied his oath with such a look, that for fear of being murdered on *the spot*, she got up and set off with him and his sister. They continued their visit at Mr. Gilchrist's till near sun-set; when Findley desired them to get ready to go home. Mrs. Gilchrist insisted that the ladies should stay with her that night. Poor Mrs. Findley's heart leaped for joy at the proposal—but Miss Findley said, that for *her part indeed, indeed* she *could not stay*, for she had promised her mother to go back that night—and Findley, in a very surly manner, called to his wife *to make haste*. So putting on her cloak, with a deep foreboding sigh she set out with them. By the time they reached the creek, Findley had found out that the canoe was

too small to carry all three of them at once! Whereupon taking in his sister, he set her over first, and returned for his wife. Had Miss Findley been either a good or a well-bred girl, she would certainly have waited for her sister that they might arm and arm have walked lovingly up the hill together. But in place of acting in this *amiable manner*, it appear'd, that the moment she reached the shore, she set off by herself, leaving her poor sister to that horrid fate, which 'tis said she but too well knew was intended for her. Findley, as was observed, went back for his wife, and having ordered her to get into the Canoe, pushed off. In a moment they were out on deep water, when raising his paddle, with the furious looks of a demon, he struck her with the edge of it on the side of her head! The blow, which was so violent as almost to cut off her ear, knocked her overboard! half drowned she came up, with eyes wild rolling with terror, and seizing the Canoe, with what of breath remained, piteously cried out—"*O my husband! my husband! dont kill me! for God's sake dont kill me! what have I done?*"

From the violence of the blow, the blood had gushed from her nose, giving her a look sufficient to touch with pity the heart of a demon: but stifling up every sentiment of humanity, he redoubled his exertions to hush her cries and to put an end to her at once. First he endeavoured to disengage her hard-clenched fingers from the Canoe; but, as fast as she was torn from one place, she laid hold on another, shrieking and screaming to him all the while for *mercy! mercy!* Finding at length that he could not easily destroy her in this way, he barbarously beat her hands from the Canoe, with his paddle, then with the end of it against her breast, pushed her backwards, still *stretching out her arms to him*, and crying for *mercy*, as long as she could, till choaked by the *bubbling*, *blood-stained* wave, her cries were silenced forever!

Oh! major Middleton! major Middleton! wretched father of a wretched child! had you but beheld this scene, with what fervor would you have implored the "*thunderer's arm*," that you might strike to instant death this cursed murderer of your child! But, ah! my dear sir! suppose I were to say to *you*, as honest Nathan said to David, "*thou art the man!*" *Thou, the first murderer of thy daughter!* how like the statue of horror would you stand?—The charge is, nevertheless, *awfully true*. Yes, be assured that when the trump of God shall sound to the last reckoning, the blood of this murdered woman shall be found in your skirts, rank smelling to heaven, and crying for judgment on her father! A father, who first could suffer a *step-mother* to drive her from his guardian side, and when she returned to him imploring forgiveness, and begging if it were only a corner in his kitchen, could then *himself* drive her away to certain *desperation* and *ruin!!*

When that good lady, your last wife, intreated you to remember that this poor girl was your *own child;* you kindled into rage and vowed eternal displeasure against a "*wretch*" that had *scandilized your family!* But pray Major Middleton, who made her that wretch? We are told in the word of God that, "there is an *oppression* which makes even a *wise man* mad;" what then must be its effects upon a poor *weak girl*, but to break her heart, to turn her brain, and to drive her to desperation? Hence the blessed precept "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath lest they be discouraged;" that is, become *disheartened* and *desperate*.

Oh! for the spirit *universal* of my old Methodist friend Joseph Harding, Esq. of Petersburgh, Virginia! his face always shines upon his children—his eyes are doves eyes, and his voice like the sound of music, to their delighted ears. When at evening, he returns from his counting room, his lovely daughters, now grown up, all meet him at the door—they

hang upon his steps to the dining room—they get on his knees, or press against his bosom, and claim their kiss. Heaven is in that circle, because 'tis filled with love.

Oh! Major Middleton! had you but thus brought up your daughter, she would have been *happy with you;* and had she been *happy*, she would never have left you; and had she never left you, she would never have been made the wretch you curse.

Besides, admitting her to have been in fault; *much* in fault; cannot a father's bosom find compassion? "*If your brother sin against you, not seven times, but seventy times seven, and repent, you must forgive him as you hope to be forgiven.*" Then take heed how you harden your heart against a daughter's cry, lest when *you* come to cry there be none to help. For if our mercy to others be to be the measure of God's mercy to us; Oh! where shall he appear who has shewn no mercy on his own child!

This unnatural cruelty to offending daughters is one of several very *unchristian* prejudices brought to us, through our forefathers, from Europe. *There*, to keep up his family as near as possible to *kingly grandeur*, a father gives the chief of his estate to his *eldest son!* thus too often exposing his younger sons, to go upon the high-way, and his daughters upon *the town!* Time was, when the Americans did so too. But now "*leaving the traditions of men,*" they are doing the better will of God, dividing their goods equally among all their children! Glory to God for the victory over this prejudice.

Again, among the great ones of Europe, the life of a poor man, and that of a dog are so nearly balanced, that it is almost as common to break the neck of the one for stealing a *pen knife*, as to hang the other for sucking an *egg!!!*

Americans formerly did so too! But now, quitting

also this horrid "*tradition of the elders*," they are trying a "*more perfect way.*" They will not thus wantonly destroy an offending brother, but build for him a *Penetentiary*—There they shut him up from doing farther harm, and by the simple virtues of hard labour, bread and water, solitude and books, they snatch him from madness and restore him to wisdom and happiness! Glory to God for the victory over *this* prejudice *also*.

Again, among the good *Christians* of Europe, if a daughter "*commit folly*," she is thrust from her father's doors and sent away like poor *Tamar* "*with her hand upon her head, crying as she goes.*" Loaded with her father's curses, and cursed with her own reflections, she turns desperate, and rather than perish in the street, yields to the will of some drunken rake. Every day her beauty becomes less delicate, and her lovers more vulgar; till soon worn out by *anguish* and *disease*, she ends her miseries in a ditch or on a dunghill.

O Americans! assert still the independence of your character, and gloriously triumph over *this barbarism also!* Shew yourselves the worthy disciples of him who came "*to seek and to save that which was lost.*" He calls you to "*overcome evil with good*,—to melt down *hatred* with "*coals* of *love*,—to *compel* to happiness even from "*hedges and highways.*" But whom, O whom, will you overcome with good? Whom will you melt with tenderness? Whom compel to the banquets of Angels, to the marriage supper of God, if it be not your own child? The greater her depravity and misery, the greater be your pity and "*labour of love*" for her recovery. Look forward to the *bright days*, that are to come! Think of the joy when you shall see your once fallen daughter raised a glorious saint! and O! think of those eyes with which Angels meet such as were their *soul's dear friends* in this vale of tears!

Again—could the STEP MOTHER of the murdered Polly Findley, have seen her as she once roved about the neighbourhood a *weeping victim* of seduction—could she have heard her *cries* when barbarously beaten, or still more barbarously drowning by an accursed husband, 'tis likely that she, even *she* would have been filled with horror! But Oh! how would she look, on being charged as the authoress of these horrid tragedies? Yes Madam, as surely as there is a God who judgeth the earth, so surely do you stand arraigned at his bar, as the murderer of this poor girl. For had you, when adopted into the wealthy family of Major

Middleton, but brought with you a *true love* of your husband, your *heart* would have acknowledged *his* little daughter as *your own;* her *pale cheeks* and *timid air* would but have *endeared her the more to you*, and inspired a tenderer interest in her; while, *with joy unknown but to those who love*, you would have pressed her to your bosom; you would have dried up her tears, and made her forget the loss of her mother! And O had you, Madam, in *continuation* of such Angel goodness, but sent her to *school:* and furnished her with *books;* and instructed her in *music* and other elegant and useful arts, you would thereby have so *ennobled* her *nature*, and *refined* her *taste*, that she would never have left your *beloved society*, nor have fallen into the hands of those wicked young men who seduced and murdered her.

And would you have been any *loser*, by acting so nobly towards this little orphan? No, madam, no! that God who is the orphan's father would have rewarded you *ten thousand fold* even *in this life.* The delicious sense of thus acting a *mothers part* by a poor motherless babe—the sweet assurance that her friends were all loving and blessing you for it—that your husband for the same reason, was every day increasing in his love and esteem for you—nay, that God himself was looking down on you well pleased; and would, assuredly, for this your "*work of love*," raise up some dear friend to *your child*, if ever she should come to be an orphan—the *least* article here, Madam, were happiness to a virtuous mind; then O what a Paradise would their combined influence have opened in your bosom?—What motives then, under Heaven, could you have had for declining so amiable a conduct with all its felicities? or, whence could have originated that *stinginess* to a little orphan, so *unnatural*, so *shocking* in one of your sex?

Ah! could we but have snatched a sheet of foolscap, warm from the *press* of your poor busy brain, how thick should we have seen it scribbled over with *fine houses*, and *carpets*, and *side-boards*, and *harpsichords*, and *silks*, and *chariots*, and a thousand other *gay things* and *great*, to be raised from your stinginess to this injured orphan! But, alas! in the midst of all these *fine speculations*, you were summoned to that "*dark* and *narrow house appointed for all living!*" Thither with unwilling steps you took your lonely way, going out of the world as *naked* as ever you came into it: leaving us the awful lesson, that, cursed is the hope of those who would cement their grandeur with orphan's tears.

But admitting you could have gained the wealth of worlds, by your cruelty to this motherless child, could the wealth of worlds, thus won, have made you happy?

No Madam! The ghost of her mother though in the grave, would often have appeared to haunt your guilty conscience! and to break your midnight slumbers with frightful dreams, for thus grieving her unprotected child! And often, when your own fretful or sickly *little ones*, in all their flaxen locks, came crying around you, your heart would be ready to break at the horrid thought of what might be inflicted on *them* when you were gone where their cries could never be heard!

You, happy! Indeed! What! WOMAN! *Lovely woman!* Born for *tenderness* and *pity!* to turn savage and wring tears and cries from helpless orphans and yet be *happy?* no Madam, "*God is love*," his whole infinite family of Angels and men are to *subsist by love*—and he who sins against this *great law*, shall in proportion to his crime, suffer a hell *within*, and shew a hell *without*. Mark, for *example*, the *hard hawk-like eye*—the *fierce Tyger-looking aspect*—the *shrill wild-cat scream*—and the *dog-like snarl, ever scolding, ever complaining!* These Madam, are the marks of *the cruel step mother*—are these, think you, the marks of *happiness?*

But admitting that by such cruel means, you had obtained your *fine houses* and *Manchester carpets*, your *mahogany side-boards* and *Silver plate*—admitting also that you kept open house, and gave as many elegant dinners as Mrs. General Washington and Mrs. General Pinckney ever did, do you suppose that all this would get *you* to be *talked of* by any but such as *liked your wine* and *venison?*

No, Madam! *Impossible*: for in every *virtuous* bosom there is an advocate for the *orphan*—and when we see him kept at a *trembling distance*, and treated as a stranger in his *own father's house*—when we see him hardly permitted to come to the *second table*—and there swallowing his morsel in silence and sadness, afraid to lift up his eyes lest they should be blasted by the Tygress that sits opposite to him! Not all the wealth of Sheba's queen, could render such a woman the object *of our esteem!* No, nor protect her name from the *harsh, teeth-gnashing curses* of her neighbours.

Let us now go back to the *wretched Findley*, whom we left in the act of murdering his wife.

The spot which he had chosen for this horrid purpose, was a deep creek winding in silence along a narrow valley, shaded with hills and trees. In this dark and dreary scene, a quarter of a mile from any habitation, he had fondly hoped to destroy her so suddenly, as to prevent *any alarm*. But God was pleased to disappoint him. For on receiving her death's wound, she instinctively exerted that *piercing cry* which God himself teaches the poor sufferer, in order to awaken *pity* or call in help.

Her cries reach'd the ear of Mr. Gilchrist, whose family, as we have observed, they had just left. Mr. Gilchrist instantly ran down to her assistance. On reaching the creek side he saw Findley on the opposite shore very busy in getting something out of the water. "*For God's sake, Mr. Findley what's the matter?*"—"*Why nothing at all,*" replied Ned, "*only that my poor wife has fallen overboard and drown'd herself, and I am trying to get her ashore; that's all.*" Mr. Gilchrist then went over and assisted him in drawing her dead body on the bank. By this time the sun was gone down. "*Well, Mr. Findley, what are you going to do with her to-night?*"

"*Why I believe,*" replied the philosophic Ned, "*the poor soul may as well lie here where she is for the night; in the morning I'll step down with a spade and dig a bit of a grave and put her in.*

Mr. Gilchrist was too much shocked to make any reply. However, by day-break next morning, he started for a magistrate (Mr. Blocker) to whom he related the whole affair, with his *own suspicions*. The magistrate instantly ordered his horse to the door. On their way they call'd and pick'd up several of the neighbours to go with them, and about sun-rise got down to the creek, where they found Ned very busy, sure enough, in digging the grave—*his dead wife lying close by!!*—"*God bless me,*" said Mr. Blocker, "*what's all this? what are you doing there Mr. Findley?*"

"*Why, 'Squire,*" replied Ned, "*my poor wife there, took it in her head to get drown'd last night; and I am just digging a hole to put her in.*"

"*Aye! why that's very kind in you, Mr. Findley! vastly kind to be sure! But suppose we save you that trouble? Lay hold on him, gentlemen, lay hold on him.*

Immediately was formed a *Coroner's inquest*, who reported that the *deceas'd* had come by her end in a *violent way*. Ned, of course, was carried to prison; and thence

presently dragg'd to the bar for *trial*, which was very brief; for his crime was soon made as *plain* as it was *unpardonable*, and sentence of death was pass'd on him to the entire satisfaction of a crowded house.—Amidst the execrations of the people, he was remanded to prison, there to lie loaded with irons till the awful day of execution. The Rev'd. Messrs. Marsh, Lendrum and Cartledge, pious Baptist divines, often went to converse with, and to rouse him, if possible, to a proper sense of the horrid crime he had committed. I have been told that he was often heard to say, "*he had no hope; Even now*, said he, *I can see the looks of my poor wife while I was murdering her; and can hear her cries! But, as I had no pity on her, there is a voice which says, there is none for me.*" Mr. Stanmore Butler, Deputy Sheriff, assured me that he used frequently to say that nothing terrified him so much as the *thought of meeting his murder'd wife!*

His time to make his peace with God was very short: for in a fortnight after sentence, he was placed on his coffin in the ignominious cart, and amidst a vast concourse carried to the gallows, there to accomplish the dread decree—"*he shall have judgment without mercy who has shewn no mercy.*"

On the morning of his execution, so great were his *terrors*, that he drank nearly a quart of brandy without suffering intoxication! He attempted, under the gallows, to address the people in a speech intended, as would seem, to engage them to *pray for him*, as also to take *warning* from *his sad example*. But it was spoken in so low a voice as to create a fear that however *well meant*, it hardly did any good.

The last incident of his life was somewhat remarkable. The board on which he stood under the gallows, sinking *at a touch*, he fell with a force that broke the halter, and gave him a bad fall on the ground. He soon got up again, but apparently much disordered.—On taking the cap from his face, his eyes appeared considerably blood-shotten and started, and the tears had found their way down his cheeks. At this the spectators all began to look sad, and some of them wept.—After he had a little recovered himself, he asked the Sheriff whether he meant to *try again* to hang him? The sheriff replied that he was *bound so to do*—"*Well then*," continued he, "for God's *sake give me something to raise my spirits, for indeed I am very low.*

The Sheriff ordered him a *half pint*, which he seized and drank with great eagernes! He was then *turned off* a second time, and after a hard struggle, as if very loth to go, his trembling spirit forsook her wretched companion, to meet the presence of a *blood-avenging God!*

Reader! if you have nature for a tear,
O! look to that gallows and shed it there.

He whom you see *struggling* there, was a *master-piece* of creation—HIS BODY, so wonderfully made, that the adoring anatomist threw down his knife and owned he knew not half its wonders—HIS SOUL, far nobler still! A beam of the *eternal fire;* capable of *knowledge* and *love* next to infinite. But now, darkened in the morning of his life; cut off in the very bloom of his being, there he struggles in the shameful halter, dying the death of a dog.

O! that we could but "*lift up our voice like a trumpet,*" and speak the language of omnipotent persuasion, to every class concerned in the morals and happines of youth.

Tender parents! think of the wretched Findley, and tremble for *your sons*! Like *theirs*, *his* face was once bright with the smiles of innocence, and his little feet, as ready, for the smallest toy, to run on errands for his friends. But, alas! all these amiable qualities were lost! forever lost for lack of education! O! then by all your bowels of pity for your dear children, spare *no pains* to educate them in LOVE, and to place them under the early care of INDUSTRY, TEMPERANCE, and HONOR! Those IMMORTAL VIRTUES appointed of God to conduct your children through a *useful* life on *earth* to a *blissful eternity in heaven.*

Generous Legislators! think of the monster Findley, and lament the curses of neglected education! O! stretch the strong arm of your power, and bid Schools and Colleges arise to *enlighten* and to *save* our land.

Look to that gibbet and mourn, ye holy preachers!—mourn the lack of *religion*—and redouble all your zeal! But not for the religion of hypocrites—for those *disfigured faces* and *carnal baptisms*, which profit nothing! but for that religion of angels, which Christ brought down from heaven—that fervent love, which gives the happy husband even *to joy in bearing the infirmities of his partner*, and by divinely obstinate tendernesses, to restore those *looks* and *smiles* which far outshine the sweetest sunbeams after clouds.

Young men! who can seduce the unsuspecting maid, and leave her to shame and woe! think of poor *Polly Middleton* and tremble! *God will assuredly bring you, one day, to judgment.*

Fortune-hunters! who, for her gold, can deceive and wed the woman you do not love. O!

Read in the wretched Findley's fate,
How God such cruel fraud doth hate.

Then shun, betimes, his crime, lest like him, you finish with *murder* what you began in *perjury.*

And O! ye fair Daughters of Wealth! learn from poor Polly Middleton's fate, to ask of HIM who gave your wealth and beauty, to crown all in the choice of a partner. For, like her, many a fine girl, with all her riches, has only purchased a Findley! a wretch, who merely for her money has married and then murdered her! Or, still worse, has left her to die a *living death!* Witness Jerome Bonaparte, and Sir John Nesbit!!! par nobile fratrum! *a charming pair of Findley's!* who, after marrying a couple of the *finest* and *wealthiest* girls in America,—(Miss Alston and Miss Patterson,) left them in early widowhood to mourn that the bright morning of their days should so soon be overcast with hopeless despair.

"*Daughter of affliction, farewell!*"—were the last words of the writer, as returning in thought to the gloomy waters of Steven's creek, he beheld poor Mary Findley, a corpse on the naked shore. Her long black hair, gather'd under her neck, was clotted with blood.—Her mouth, which was open, still seem'd to plead for pity; and the horrors of *death* tho' past, were strongly painted on her ghastly countenance. But tho' *silent* as the grave that waited to receive her, yet there was a voice heard from the martyr'd dead—it was that, *still, small voice* which calls the world to wisdom when the Judgments of God are thundering in the earth. It spoke to *all*, but loudest to her surviving *sisters.* "Daughters of beauty! it seem'd to say—hear the voice of a sister crying from her early grave—from the mouth of that grave which is soon to close on my mangled form—from the mouth of the grave dug by a husband's hands, I call—O! hear my counsel. *Shun, as you would a demon, the man who scorns religion! our helpless sex's only guardian,* whose divine power alone exalts a husband's soul, confirms

his virtues—sweetens his spirit—and opens in his bosom a never-failing fount of *loves* and *joys*. Destitute of these, he cannot but be wretched! and wretched himself, how can he but make us so? Hence it was that my days, tho' *few, have been full of misery*—hence, my tears were early made to flow, and they never ceased—hence, even in *motherless childhood* I was abandoned by a father! afflicted by a step-mother! deceived by a lover! driven out by a sister! and barbarously murdered by a husband!

"But Oh! thou most adorable, most unadored Lord God! though all others forsook me, yet *thou* wouldst not leave me nor forsake me! Thou, MIGHTY KING OF SAINTS! didst still cleave to me, didst still follow me with more than a mother's wooing! Day and night thy voice in my troubled heart was heard—"*Turn! O turn! why wilt thou die?* Why thus feed on the swinish husks of sin and sorrow, when feasts of purity and love are spread for thee! How long wilt thou "*lie blackened among the pots*" of nakedness and shame, while my wardrobes are sparkling with angel's garments?

"His call was not in vain.—With tears I rose up to return to my Father—he hastened to meet me. The words of his mouth were sweet.—"*Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee!—go and sin no more.*" With a change of life, I found a change of feeling. O! change! from lowest hell to highest heaven! Dreading relapse, I sought the sanctuary of marriage—and there was murdered! But tho' my body perished, yet my soul is safe. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day on the earth. These eyes, tho' darkened in death, shall see his glory. These, now bleeding ears, shall hear his voice—and this poor mangled body shall come forth, and with an immortal tongue shall sing my *great Restorer's* praise for ever."

Could you with ink the ocean fill,
With parchment all the land;
Were every single stick a quill,
A scribe, each ready hand—
To write thy love, O Saviour God!
Would run that ocean dry!
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Tho' stretch'd from sky to sky!

FINIS.

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